

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KHARTO 01659 121436Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /099 W
-----099419 130625Z /15

R 121118Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7080
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 1659

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, PINS, PINT, SU
SUBJECT: LABOR STRIFE IN SUDAN

REF: (A) KHARTOUM 1632 (B) KHARTOUM 1619

1. STRIKE BY DOCTORS UNION WHICH WAS CALLED OFF APRIL 9
FLARED UP AGAIN APRIL 10 IN WILDCAT ACTION BUT IS PRESENTLY
NOT OPERATIVE. DOCTORS IN GENERAL ARE ANGRY AT NIMEIRI'S
SPEECH APRIL 9 WHICH AMOUNTED TO INCITEMENT AGAINST DOCTORS
FOR EXCESS EARNINGS AND GREED. POLICE IN OMDURMAN HAD TO
PROTECT SEVERAL MEDICAL CLINICS FROM ANGRY MOBS FOLLOWING
SPEECH. MEDIA CONTINUE TO REPORT ANTI-STRIKE COMMENTS BY
UNION LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WHILE PRO-STRIKE
EVENTS AND EXPLANATIONS ARE LEFT TO WORD-OF-MOUTH.

2. ABUL GASSIM RETURNED TO KHARTOUM FROM ONE DAY VISIT
APRIL 11 TO ATBARA WHERE HE SPOKE WITH UNION LEADERS.
TRIP WAS GIVEN PROMINENT COVERAGE IN PRESS. SUNA ALSO
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PAGE 02 KHARTO 01659 121436Z

REPORTED THAT WORKSHOPS DEMANDS WILL BE DISCUSSED BY
RAILWAYS CORPORATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS TODAY. ACCORDING
RUMORS, RAILWAYS WORKERS TRIED TO BURN DOWN HOUSE OF
UNION LEADER IN VIOLENCE LAST WEEKEND. OTHER REPORTING
INDICATES THAT SIXTY PERSONS WERE ARRESTED IN ATBARA
OVER PERIOD OF LAST FEW DAYS BUT ALL HAVE BEEN RELEASED
NOW. ABUL GASSIM WILL APPARENTLY CONTINUE MEETINGS WITH

VARIOUS UNION LEADERS IN KHARTOUM.

3. LARGE ANTI-STRIKE DEMONSTRATION IS PLANNED FOR PORT SUDAN APRIL 12, SIMILAR TO RALLY IN KHARTOUM APRIL 9 WHERE NIMEIRI MADE CONTROVERSIAL SPEECH. ANNOUNCEMENT OF RALLY TO DEMONSTRATE "REJECTION OF STRIKES" AND SUPPORT FOR NIMEIRI IS OF COURSE INTERPRETED AS CONFIRMATION OF RUMORS OF LABOR STRIFE IN PORT SUDAN. DOCK WORKERS WERE ALLEGEDLY STAGING SLOW-DOWN. ONLY HALF DOZEN TECHNICIANS AT PORT SUDAN WERE INVOLVED IN LAST WEEK'S TECHNICIANS STRIKE. ON OTHER HAND, LOCAL CHEVRON MANAGER TOLD AMBASSADOR AND DCM THAT HIS COMPANY'S OPERATIONS WERE SERIOUSLY, ALBEIT BRIEFLY, AFFECTED LAST WEEK WHEN TECHNICIANS IN SOUTHERN KORDOFAN WALKED OFF JOB, THEREBY INTERRUPTING DRILLING OPERATIONS WHICH MUST MOVE QUICKLY IF COMPANY IS TO AVOID HEAVY SPRING RAINS IN AREA.

4. COMMENT: NIMEIRI APPARENTLY IS OUT OF COUNTRY FOR A WEEK (SEPTTEL). MEANWHILE, LABOR UNREST CONTINUES WITH NO CLEAR FOCUS AT PRESENT. TEMPERS STILL ARE SHORT, AS KHARTOUM EXPERIENCES LOSS OF WATER PRESSURE AND POWER OUTAGES. THIS IS "NORMAL" I.E., PROBABLY NOT RPT NOT DUE TO STRIKE, BUT IT CERTAINLY DOESN'T HELP GENERAL MOOD. STILL, RELATIVELY SWIFT, STERN SUDANGOV ACTION, ONCE STRIKES WERE UNDERWAY SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN BLUNTING STRIKERS, AT LEAST FOR NOW. EPISODE, NO
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PAGE 03 KHARTO 01659 121436Z

DOUBT, HAS BEEN SOBERING, PARTICULARLY CONSIDERING HOW FAR STRIKES SPREAD THROUGHOUT COUNTRY.
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